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DEPARTMENT FOR S/WE Sasha Mehra and Gerda Lane

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SUBJECT: TOP FIVE INFLUENTIAL WOMEN IN IRAQ

REF: 06 STATE 202341

¶1. In response to Department's request for a list of the top five influential women in Iraq, post submits the following names:

Wijdan Mikael Salim  
Minister of Human Rights  
Tel: 914-822-5076

Maysoon Al-Damluji  
CoR Member, Iraqiyya List  
Secretary, Iraqiyya Party

SIPDIS  
Publisher, Noon Magazine  
Tel: 914-360-5145  
Email: aldamluji@aol.com

Hanaa Edwar  
Director, Al Amal NGO  
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Nada Al-Sudani  
CoR Member, UIC (Dawa Party)  
Tel: 914-822-1576

Tayseer Al-Mashadani  
CoR Member, Tawafiq (IIP)  
Tel: 914-822-9559  
Tayseir75@yahoo.com

¶2. In compiling this list, post considered a number of women in business, politics, and civil society. Most of the businesswomen who were considered are currently residents of Jordan, having fled violence and in many cases, specific threats against their lives. Unfortunately there are no outstanding women in the Iraqi media at present, with female politicians rather than journalists dominating the airwaves. Although there are many outstanding women working in civil society organizations, post is unsure of how truly influential they are in society as a whole. The fact that post's list includes 3 members of parliament and a minister highlights the extent to which Iraqi society is still dominated by a top-down mentality.

¶3. This exercise also raised interesting questions about the role of sectarianism in the women's movement in Iraq. When discussing the issue of influential women with Iraqi contacts, poloffs received greatly varying answers from members of different religious and ethnic groups. Poloffs also noted that many women who emboffs believe to be influential and who routinely meet with high level US officials, were not necessarily perceived as having great influence within Iraq. Post intends to expand upon these issues in a later cable.

¶4. Post's women's issues coordinator is: Larilyn Reffett

(ReffettL@state.gov; 914-822-6832).

SPECKHARD